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ADDRESS

TO

FRIENDS AND FRIENDLY PEOPLE;

BEING

AN EXHORTATION TO FAITHFULNESS

IN THE

MAINTENANCE OF OUR CHRISTIAN TESTIMONY AGAINST

SLAVERY.

Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and
touch not the unclean thing.

PHILADELPHIA:

T. ELLWOOD CHAPMAN, No. 74 NORTH FOURTH ST.

1848.

**At New Garden Monthly Meeting of Friends (Chester Co.
Pa.,) held the Seventh of the Ninth Month, 1848.**

The Address, reported to last Meeting by the Committee charged with the duty of "presenting such views, as might open in the Truth, for the mutual strength and encouragement of Friends, in the support of our righteous testimony against Slavery," was again read, in this, and women's meeting. On deliberate consideration, the recommendation of the Committee, in favour of its publication for general distribution, was adopted with much unanimity—and the Committee continued to have it printed.—Extracted from the Minutes.

EZRA MICHENER, }
MARY S. MICHENER, } *Clerks.*

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ADDRESS.

To Friends, and friendly people, who believe with us, "that the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man, to profit withal."

DEAR FRIENDS:—

The love, which Jesus enjoined upon his followers, and which is the badge of true discipleship with him, includes the whole human family within its comprehensive embrace, without distinction of nation, sect, or colour. In a measure of this love, and may it more and more abound among us, we feel drawn to address you. While we would forbear, needlessly to hurt the feelings, or to reprove the conduct of any, both duty and consistency requires us to speak the truth in all sincerity; for we feel the necessity of obeying the apostolic injunction, "preach the word, be instant in season, out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long suffering and doctrine." As it is our purpose to address the understanding and appeal to the conscience, we would forbear to urge our sentiments upon others, further than they are accompanied with an evidence of the Truth. We would, also, charitably ask for them a patient hearing, and an impartial consideration, before they are rejected. Let us, "above all things, put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness."

Whatever sectarian dogmas may prevail in the religious world, we, as Friends, profess to believe that the Church of Christ is, and ever will be, founded upon the revelation of the will of God in the souls of men, as was foretold by the prophet, promised by Jesus himself, and verified in the experience of the faithful, ever since the apostolic age. "After those days I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts." "I will not leave you comfortless. I will pray the Father and He shall give another comforter, that he may abide with you forever; which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name. He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." This immediate revelation in the soul of man, is the immutable rock upon which Christianity is founded; it is the fundamental doctrine of the religious Society of Friends. For we profess to believe, with the Apostle, that "the grace of God which bringeth salvation, hath appeared unto all men,

teaching them, that denying ungodliness and the world's lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world, looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ." As George Fox bore testimony, this Divine monitor, if properly attended to, would be "a teacher to instruct us, a counsellor to direct us, a shepherd to feed us, a bishop to oversee us, and a prophet to open Divine mysteries to us." The command, "Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, (which signifies a quiet, and peaceable habitation,) until ye be endued with power from on high," is as obligatory, on every son and daughter of Adam, now, as it was on those to whom it was immediately given. And those who sincerely desire, and patiently wait for this qualification, will assuredly experience the fulfilment of the prophecy, "I will pour out of my spirit upon all flesh."

If then, man's duty consists in obedience to the will of God, revealed in his soul; and in quietly waiting until endued with power from on high, to know, and a qualification to do that will, it must follow, that disobedience to the requirements of manifested duty in the mind, is the prolific source of the manifold evils which abound in the earth, and also, that individual obedience to such requirements, would effectually remedy those evils. Our hearts' desire and prayer for Israel is, that we may all, individually, feel the great necessity there is for us to come into this obedience, and to experience our own wills completely subjected to the Divine will, in all things whatsoever he may require of us: whether he shall command us to "stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord," or to blow the trumpet on every side of the camp, and cry, "the sword of the Lord, and of Gideon." If, under the rituals of the law, "to obey was better than sacrifice, and to hearken, than the fat of rams," how much more necessary that we should be faithful, and obedient, to the manifestations of Truth, under the Gospel, which is an inward and spiritual dispensation.

It is to be feared, that a large amount of the ostensible religion of the people, is merely a nominal religion. That, among religious professors, there remains to be many such as the prophet testified against, "wo unto them that are at ease in Zion, that are named chief of the nations, that put far away the evil day, that lie upon beds of ivory, and

stretch themselves upon couches, and eat the lambs out of the flock, *but are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph.*" And also, many of whom the Apostle spake, "who have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge, for, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, *they have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.*"

Among all the lo heres, and the lo theres, may it become our happy experience, "that this is life eternal, to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." To know God, is to love him, above all, and to obey the manifestations of his will. Let us, therefore, strive to become wholly passive, as the clay in the hands of the potter, willing to be fashioned into vessels of honour, or of dishonour, and to be, to do, and to suffer any thing, or nothing, as the master workman may direct.

The foregoing remarks are made, with a special reference to the performance of our duties, in relation to Slavery, and are commended to the serious attention of Friends.

Slavery is a wide-spread, national evil. It exists every where throughout our land. No section of country, no class of people are exempt from its baneful influence. Its roots penetrate every soil; its branches ramify over every field; it poisons every avenue of commerce; it corrupts every political movement; it deteriorates every moral impulse; it prostitutes the religion of the nation to the support of the most atrocious injustice, cruelty, and wickedness. Such is, very briefly, the character of American slavery, which we are called upon to contemplate. If such an enormous evil exists in our midst, does it not behoove us, as men—as American citizens—as followers of Him who commanded us, "in all things, whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them:" we solemnly ask, does it not behoove us to consider, most seriously to consider, whether we are not deeply implicated in this monstrous system of iniquity? Whether it is not our duty to wash our hands from its pollutions? Whether we cannot do something to wipe away the deep reproach, and to diminish the aggregate of degradation, of misery, and of crime, which it produces?

The extrinsic support which we give to slavery, is, mainly, threefold—Religious, Political, and Commercial.

1. *Religious*.—The popular religion of the country manifestly sustains slavery. Without occupying much time on this subject, we may remark, that while the sovereignty of a public religious sentiment is often too apparent in other matters, slavery escapes almost without rebuke. While very many of the American churches seem to tolerate it, there are those who vindicate it, as “a Divine ordinance, designed for wise and benevolent purposes, and productive of great good to the human family.” We here speak of the popular sentiment within those churches. Is there not a danger of such falling into the condition of some formerly, “whose mind and conscience were defiled. They profess that they know God, yet in works they deny him; being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.”

If the grand purpose of religious association is the mutual strength and encouragement, one of another, in every good and perfect work; if, to be a Christian, is to be Christ-like; if religion is an inward, and an individual work, carried on in the soul; if its duties and requirements are there made manifest; and, if love to God and to our neighbour, is the highest duty of the Christian, how necessary for us to divest ourselves of all the prejudice of circumstances, and of every selfish and unworthy feeling! As we attain to this, we shall be enabled to render entire obedience to the manifestations of Truth, however small they may appear, or wheresoever they may lead. “Blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it.”

2. *Political*.—The national government; the executive, legislative, and military powers; the leading political organizations of the country, are all efficient supporters of slavery. Hence, it becomes a very grave inquiry for Friends—one which we should weightily consider—whether we can, consistent with our high and holy profession, mingle in the political movements of the day? Whether we do not lay waste our precious testimonies, when we give the voluntary and active support of our suffrage to candidates for offices, the duties of which are such, that we could not, consistently and conscientiously, perform them ourselves? Whether we can, rightfully, delegate the power to another, to perform duties which it would be wrong for us to execute? Without wishing to judge others, in these matters, we may be

allowed to give a reason for the hope which is in us. We profess to abhor slavery, as being exceeding sinful; yet, we give our suffrage to men who are not only practical slaveholders and advocates for the practice, but who proclaim a willingness, and whose duty of office it is, to sustain slavery with the weight of their official influence, and with the treasure, the sword, and the blood of the nation. Whatsoever we do by an agent, we do ourselves. Do we not, therefore, constitute those officers our agents? And are we not accountable for their doings? It seems a poor apology to say, that they belong to this or to that party; that they are better qualified than that or the other candidate. Would it not be more rational and consistent for us to inquire, have we a moral right to appoint agents to perform the duties which appertain to those offices? Are the candidates good men, qualified for the high trust reposed in them, and disposed to do justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with God? If they are not, would it not be wise to withhold our suffrage from them? It is not meet for us to do evil that good may follow. For want of attending to this salutary caution, it has often been with us, as it was with some formerly, "who looked for peace, but no good came; and for a time of health, but behold trouble." Politicians are beginning to have the scales removed from their eyes, and to see men, like trees, walking. The late Ohio Convention has this advice: "vote on principle; vote right; and you need not fear the consequences. A vote given in accordance with the dictates of conscience, is never lost. Its salutary influence, as a noble testimony for Truth and Freedom, will be felt, whether the candidate be elected or not." The same remark is equally true of a vote *withheld*, as of a vote *given*, from conscientious motives. Its influence will be felt, as a noble testimony to the Truth.

An attachment to party involves us in the support of all the measures which it may pursue. We must surrender up our own judgment, our individual sense of what is right, and submit to be led, perhaps without much reflection, until we are in danger of coming to partake of the feeling, and to adopt the odious motto, "*our party right or wrong.*" We feel an earnest solicitude that Friends may abide in the ever blessed Truth, and be preserved from having their minds enlisted in the strife and confusion of political warfare. And this, we have an assurance, will be the expe

rience of all those who are faithful and obedient to the light of grace in their minds.

3. *Commercial.*—The commercial industry of the country sustains slavery. *It is pursued for the profits arising from the sale of its products.* The natural productiveness of the soil where it exists, and the general demand for its staple productions have led to their universal use. Literally speaking, they freight every vessel; they fill every ware-house; they give activity to every manufactory; they are found upon every counter; they furnish every dwelling; they fill every wardrobe; they supply the luxuries, and the dessert, upon every table. This is the *herculean pillar* which sustains the fabric of oppression.

It will hardly be denied, that the market for slave products, stimulates the slaveholder to produce them. Does it not, therefore, follow, *that he who furnishes the motive en-thralls the slave?* That the *purchaser of slave goods is, virtually, the slaveholder*; and that he who owns the slave is merely an agent in their production? Slaveholders understand this; and while they respect the man, and appreciate the motives, of the consistent friend of the slave, they despise him whose practice does not accord with his profession, in regard to slavery.

"Stop, sir," said a slaveholder to a friend, who was speaking against slavery on a Delaware steamer, "I wish to ask you one question: Do you use the products of slave labour?" "I do not," answered the friend. "Then I will listen to you, for *your practice accords with your profession,*" was the subdued reply.

If property, wrested from the feeble and the unoffending by the strong arm of power and oppression, is wrongfully obtained, then do the products of slave labour belong to this class. John Woolman observes: "The trading in, or frequent use of, any produce known to be raised by those who are under such lamentable oppression, hath appeared to me to be a subject which may yet require the more serious consideration of the humble followers of Christ, the Prince of Peace. After long and mournful exercise, I am free to mention how things have opened in my mind; with desires, that if it please the Lord further to open his will to any of his children, in this matter, they may faithfully follow him in such manifestation."

The same process of reasoning will apply in the case of slave produce, as to any other, when property is unjustly obtained. Every man has a natural and indefeasible right to the profits of his own labour. They are exclusively his own, and he is fully competent to transfer the right to them to whom he pleases. But, where a man obtains the property of another by any kind of fraud, or violence, without his consent, he does not, thereby, acquire a right to such property, nether can he convey a right in it to a third person. For it is a settled maxim in law and equity, that we cannot give to another a better title to a thing than we possess ourselves. A thief has only the *title of a thief* to his booty; and the purchaser cannot have any better title than the seller possessed, *the title of a thief*; and this must continue to be the title of the possessor, through however many hands it may pass. Another admitted principle in jurisprudence is, that the purchaser of stolen goods, (knowing them to be such,) is *particeps criminis* with the thief, and liable to the same penalty; while the property, so purchased, reverts back to him from whom it was stolen. Let us apply these plain and obvious principles of law and justice to the traffic in, and the use of, the productions of slavery.

We repeat, that every man has a natural, and indefeasible right to his own person, to his own labour, and to the profits which it affords. He will not, voluntarily, surrender those rights to another, without an equivalent; and no man can, justly, take them from him, without his consent. He may be deprived of the privilege of exercising his rights by the strong arm of power; but they will continue unchanged, for they are indefeasible. The manstealer may seize, and bind, and carry him to a distant country, and there sell him, where he will be compelled to labour under the torture of the lash, without pity, and without compensation. But all this is done in direct contravention of his rights, as a man. *It is slavery.* The man was stolen, he was robbed of himself, he was robbed of his labour, he was robbed of the profits of his labour. *He is a slave.* Now it is this stolen man, this slave, his labour, and the produce of it, which come to us, under the less abhorrent names of cotton, rice, sugar, tobacco, &c. The form, only, has been changed to suit our wants; *the intrinsic nature of the articles remains the same; it is unchangeable; they are stolen goods.* For if the man and his labour were stolen, so must all the

products of the man and his labour, be stolen; whether it may be his children, or the cotton produced by his labour. They have been wrested from the rightful owner by a resort to physical force. They are the booty of the victor, plundered from the vanquished, just as much so as any property taken upon the high seas by an enemy, in a state of war. *They are emphatically prize goods.* Hence, is not the conclusion unavoidable, that the produce of this slave's toil should be considered equally *contraband* by the *conscientious christian dealer*, as any other description of prize goods whatever?

Now, if the man was stolen, if his labour was extorted by force, does it not follow, that the master can only possess the title of a thief, and a robber, to either the man, or to his labour: no matter through how many generations they may have descended: neither time nor circumstance can improve it; for, as we have seen, a man cannot give a better title than he possesses. Does it not follow, that those who traffic in, and make use of, the products of slavery, cannot possess a better title to them than the master did, which, as we have shown, was obtained by fraud and violence? And, does it not also follow, that the purchaser (knowing them to be such) becomes *particeps criminis* with the slaveholder in the guilt of slavery? *That, in fact, the consumer becomes the prime mover in the process, and the planter sinks to the subordinate rank of a PAY AGENT, for the management of the transaction!*

By a mode of reasoning similar to this, Elias Hicks arrived at a like conclusion, many years ago. "Although the original possessor committed the first act of violence, when he took from the man, he styles his slave, his liberty, and compelled him to work; and, by the same cruel force, took from him the produce of his labour; yet, every purchaser of such slave, or, of the produce of his labour (if he is apprised of the criminal circumstances attending it) *is as guilty as the first perpetrator.* And, should such slave, and the produce of his labour, pass through the hands of twenty persons, (all knowing, at the time of transfer, the criminal circumstances attending,) *each would be guilty of the entire crime.*"

When David thirsted, three captains of Israel "brake through the hosts of the Philistines, and drew water out of the well of Bethlehem, and brought it to him. But David

said, My God forbid it me that I should do this thing; shall I drink the blood of these men, that have put their lives in jeopardy?" Oh! that there were more Davids, in our Israel, who would abhor to eat the flesh, and to drink the blood of the slaves, whose lives have not only been put in jeopardy, but have been sacrificed, by tens of thousands, for the gratification of our tastes.

The merchant, the manufacturer, the retailer, and more than all these, the *consumer* of slave products, (for they are virtually his agents,) furnish the profits of the system, the *pabulum* on which it feeds, and without which, it must speedily dwindle into insignificance, and cease to exist. An Address, issued by the New York yearly meeting of (orthodox) Friends, in 1845, has the following excellent remarks: "To hire a slave, and pay the wages to his master, would be deemed nearly equivalent to slaveholding. If this slave toils for his master, and *we* purchase the produce of his labour, do we not contribute, as effectually, to the gain of the slaveholder, as in the other case? If another person purchases this produce for the purpose of traffic, and we buy of him, for the purpose of consuming it, another link is added to the chain, but is not the connexion with the slaveholder as complete, as in the first instance? It is true that we are further removed from the scene of oppression, and, it may be, that this increased distance has tended to pacify the conscience, in a course which is not consistent with sound reasoning; and, thus, may we not have contributed too long, to encourage, by our conduct, a system of oppression which we have so sincerely lamented."

If, by the traffic in and the use of slave product, we become agents in the support and perpetuation and extension of slavery, does it not become our solemn duty, at once, and at whatever sacrifice of money or of comfort it may require, to endeavour, as far as possible, to abstain from such traffic, and such use?

Our religious society has fully recognized the principles on which the foregoing deduction is founded. In the Discipline we read, "that some, in membership with us, either through inadvertency, or, from selfish motives, have hired slaves to assist them in their business. We desire such to consider, that in so doing, they promote the unrighteous traffic, and oppose our testimony against it. It is our sense,

that when slaves are thus hired, and the price of their services is intended for the benefit of those who claim the right of ownership, &c., such conduct, is a violation of our testimony." But it would seem to be a distinction without a difference, whether we pay the master *wages* or *price*. Wages for the labour, or price for the product of that labour. It obviously cannot effect the *condition* of the slave, whether he labours in his master's field, or in ours. In either case, he is still a slave; he has to perform the same unrequited labour; the master receives compensation for that which belongs to another, and we furnish the same motive for him still to hold his fellow man in bondage. The only possible difference is, whether the man shall hoe corn on this side of the fence, or on the other, and even this distinction may be lost, for both owner and employer may occupy in the same enclosure.

We, therefore, renewedly urge upon every reflecting mind, that *it is the compensation which the master receives for his slave's labour which sustains slavery, and supplies the governing motive for its continuance.* And this compensation is almost wholly paid by those who traffic in, and make use of, slave products. The mere form, or conventional name, which it may chance to wear; or the number of hands through which it may have to pass, between him and the consumer, does not affect the issue. That, if we are really concerned for the welfare and emancipation of the slave; if we are desirous to purify ourselves from the contaminations of slavery, we must exercise great watchfulness that we do not furnish the oppressor with any motive to oppress, lest we become "partakers of other men's sins."

The foregoing argument, to show our participation in the support of slavery, may appear fallacious to some; but we submit it to the candid consideration of such, with an assurance, that he who will seriously undertake to show its fallacy will become convinced of its correctness. A much larger number will, probably, acknowledge the reasoning correct, and the conclusions just, but excuse themselves that they have not felt it incumbent on them to refrain. Here appears to be an inconsistency, and a source of extreme danger. We acknowledge a conviction that slaveholding is sinful; that by purchasing slave products we encourage that sin; and do we not deceive ourselves when we plead that we have not felt it to be our duty to abstain

from their use? Do we not always feel it to be a duty to abstain from sin? And do we not perceive that this very conviction, that slavery is wrong, is a manifestation of duty not to countenance that wrong? If we do not yield obedience to this conviction, we can hardly look for further light upon the subject. It was not until the good servant had proved himself faithful in a *very little*, that he received the promise of being made ruler over *more*.

The facilities for sustaining this righteous testimony, without being subjected to onerous privations, have been greatly extended within a few years. It appears to be well ascertained, that there is now a sufficiency of almost every article essential to life and comfort, produced by free labour; and which can be obtained at a cost very little above that of slave products. And we are encouraged to believe that the supply will continue equal to the demand, however great that may become. This is a gratifying circumstance, and ought to inspire us with new vigour in the promotion of so important an object. The plea of difficulty is no longer available; and it is the only plausible one, out of the many which have been made, for indulgence in slave products. After noticing several of these, the Address, formerly quoted, remarks—"When arguments like these are balanced against the monstrous and positive evils of slavery, to which they serve as props; and we, for a moment, suppose ourselves in the condition of the enslaved; and then bring those arguments to that moral test of right in our own bosoms, which is always in perfect agreement with the precept enjoined by our Holy Redeemer—"Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them"—does not the conviction fasten upon us, that such arguments are too light to sustain a system by which millions of our fellow men are deprived of those inalienable rights which are the gifts of God, bestowed alike upon all."

It is often urged that abolitionists traffic in and use slave produce; and that even those who profess to have scruples about using them, nevertheless, traffic in them for profit. So far from justifying such conduct, we exceedingly regret that any friends of the slave should be so inconsistent with themselves and the Truth, and thus balk the testimony they are vainly endeavouring to support. But, it may be hoped, that after witnessing their short-comings, we may be more careful to demean ourselves in accordance with our pro-

fession, and thus set a becoming example for them to imitate.

Among the pretexts for indulging in the use of slave products, there is one which, from its frequency and the assurance with which it is put forth, may require notice. It is, that if we do deny ourselves, others will still use them; and our influence will be but a drop from the bucket, too insignificant to be felt, and can do no good. We answer, that slavery, like most other great evils, is compounded of many lesser ones. National wrongs are made up of the wrongs of individuals, each of which is accountable for his own share. Consequently, if each individual would refrain from doing his portion of the wrong the whole nation would do right. If we were only concerned to keep ourselves pure, and unspotted from the sin of slavery, we know not how great might be the influence of our example upon others; but we do know that the command is positive, to "let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works;" and the promise is no less sure, that "blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

The retrospect of the past is full of interest; its history, while it affords both admonition and instruction, may also inspire us with confidence of future success. We there learn that, within the past century, Friends not only owned and bought and sold their fellow men, but that they were actually concerned in that detestable business, the African slave trade; a trade which even a slaveholding government has stigmatized, and now punishes, as piracy, with the severest penalty of the law—death.

It seems strange to us that men, professing to be led and guided by an unerring principle of universal brotherhood and love, should have been seduced into such practices. Yet the fact is undeniable, and should make us careful to inquire, whether we may not also be concerned in practices which the Truth will yet condemn.

It may be proper to give a very brief sketch of the slow and progressive manner in which Friends yielded to the manifestations of light and the requirements of duty, towards their own slaves and the practice of slave holding. The following abstract is mostly taken from "a brief statement of the rise and progress of the testimony of the religious Society of Friends, against Slavery," published in 1843, by the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of (Orthodox) Friends.

During a visit to the island of Barbadoes, in 1671, George Fox says, in his journal: "Respecting their negroes, I desired them to endeavour to train them up in the fear of God, as well those that were bought with their money as them that were born in their families, that all might come to the knowledge of the Lord, that so, with Joshua, every master of a family might say, 'as for me, and my house, we will serve the Lord.' I desired, also, that they would cause their overseers to deal mildly and gently with their negroes, and not use cruelty towards them, as the manner of some hath been and is; and that, after certain years of servitude they should make them free."

The Philadelphia Yearly Meeting was instituted in the year 1681. By a minute of 1688, it appears that a paper was "presented by some German Friends, concerning the lawfulness and unlawfulness of buying and keeping of negroes. It was adjudged not to be so proper for this meeting to give a positive judgment in the case, it having so general a relation to many other parts, and therefore they at present forbear it." The curious paper above referred to was recently found and published in the "*Friend*," of the 13th of 1st month, 1844, from which it is copied.

This is to the Monthly Meeting held at Richard Worrell's.

These are the reasons why we are against the traffic of men-body, as followeth. Is there any that would be done or handled at this manner? viz., to be sold or made a slave for all the time of his life? How fearful and faint-hearted are many on sea, when they see a strange vessel,—being afraid it should be a Turk, and they should be taken and sold for slaves into Turkey? Now what is *this* better done than Turks do? Yea, rather is it worse for them, which say they are Christians; for we hear that most part of such negers are brought hither against their will and consent, and that many of them are stolen. Now, though they are black, we cannot conceive there is more liberty to have them slaves, as it is to have other white ones. There is a saying, that we shall do to all men like as we will be done ourselves; making no difference of what generation, descent, or colour they are. And those who steal or robb men, and those who buy or purchase them, are they not all alike? Here is liberty of conscience, which is right and reasonable; here ought to be likewise liberty of the body, except of evil-doers, which is another case. But to bring men hither, or to rob and sell them against their will, we stand against. In Europe there are many oppressed for conscience sake; and here there are those oppressed which are of a black colour. And we who know that men must not commit adultery, some do commit adultery *in* others, separating wives from their husbands and giving them to others; and some

sell the children of these poor creatures to other men. Ah! do consider well this thing, you who do it, if you would be done at this manner? and if it is done according to Christianity? You surpass Holland and Germany in this thing. This makes an ill report in all those countries of Europe, where they hear of, that the Quakers do here handel men as they handel there the cattle. And for that reason some have no mind or inclination to come hither. And who shall maintain this your cause, or plead for it? Truly we cannot do so, except you shall inform us better hereof, viz., that Christians have liberty to practise these things. Pray, what thing in the world can be done worse towards us, than if men should rob or steal us away, and sell us for slaves to strange countries; separating husbands from their wives and children. Being now this is not done in the manner we would be done at, therefore we contradict, and are against this traffic of men-body. And we who profess that it is not lawful to steal, must, likewise, avoid to purchase such things as are stolen, but rather help to stop this robbing and stealing if possible. And such men ought to be delivered out of the hands of the robbers, and set free as in Europe.* Then is Pennsylvania to have a good report, instead it hath now a bad one for this sake in other countries. Especially, whereas the Europeans are desirous to know in what manner the Quakers do rule in their province,—and most of them do look upon us with an envious eye. But if this is done well, what shall we say is done evil?

If once these slaves (which they say are so wicked and stubborn men) should join themselves—fight for their freedom,—and handel their masters and mistresses as they did handel them before: will these masters and mistresses take the sword at hand and war against these poor slaves, like, we are able to believe, some will not refuse to do? or have these negers not as much right to fight for their freedom, as you have to keep them slaves?

Now consider well this thing, if it is good or bad. And in case you find it to be good to handel these blacks at that manner, we desire and require you hereby lovingly, that you may inform us herein, which at this time never was done, viz., that Christians have such a liberty to do so. To the end we shall be satisfied in this point, and satisfy likewise our good friends and acquaintances in our native country, to whom it is a terror, or fearful thing, that men should be handled so in Pennsylvania.

This is from our meeting at Germantown, held y^e 18 of the 2 month, 1688, to be delivered to the Monthly Meeting at Richard Worrell's.

Garret henderich
derick up de graeff
Francis daniell Pastorius
Abraham jr. Den graef.

At our Monthly Meeting at Dublin, y^e 30—2 mo., 1688, we having inspected y^e matter, above mentioned, and considered of it, we find it so weighty that we think it not expedient for us to meddle with it

* Alluding, probably, to the abolition of the old feudal system.

here, but do rather commit it to y^e consideration of y^e Quarterly Meeting; y^e tenor of it being nearly related to y^e Truth.

On behalf of y^e Monthly Meeting.

Signed,

P. JO. HART.

It was not until 1696, that the Yearly Meeting fully recognized a testimony against the importation of slaves, and in favour of affording them moral and religious instruction. It advised "that Friends be careful not to encourage the bringing in any more negroes."

In 1711, the concern again came up from Chester monthly and quarterly meetings, who were "dissatisfied with Friends buying, and encouraging the bringing in of negroes, and desired the care and notice of the Yearly Meeting." Advices were again issued, "not to encourage the bringing in of any more; and that all merchants, and factors, write to their correspondents to discourage them from sending any more."

In the following year, 1712, the concern appears to have taken a wider range. Friends say, in their epistle to the London Yearly Meeting: "We impart unto you a concern that hath rested on our minds for many years, touching the importing and having negro slaves, and detaining them and their posterity, as such, without any limitation or time of redemption from that condition." "We thought it too weighty to come to a full conclusion therein. This meeting, therefore, desires your assistance by way of counsel and advice therein." We only know that the answer was such as to encourage them to abide under the weight of their concern.

In 1715, Chester and Newark Monthly Meetings, again opened their concern to Chester Quarter, "at Friends being concerned in importing and buying of negroes; and do request the concurrence of the meeting with them, that Friends be not concerned in the importing and bringing of them." The Quarterly Meeting sent up a minute, that "taking the same into their serious and weighty consideration, it is the *unanimous sense* and judgment of this meeting, that Friends should not be concerned in importing and bringing of negro slaves for the future." The ensuing Yearly Meeting made a minute, "If any Friends are concerned in the importation of negroes let them be dealt with, and advised to avoid that practice."

In 1716 another advance was made, in the testimony by

Chester Monthly Meeting, requesting the Quarter "to take into further consideration the buying and selling of negroes; *which gives great encouragement to the bringing of them in*; and that no Friends shall be found in the practice of buying any that shall be imported hereafter." Here is a full recognition of the great principle, *that the market makes the traffic*. It was, however, a bold advance, for which the Yearly Meeting was not prepared, for it could see "no more in it than was proposed last year." "Yet, in condescension to such Friends as are straitened in their minds against the holding of them, it is desired that Friends generally do, as much as may be, avoid buying such negroes as shall be hereafter brought in, rather than offend any Friends that are against it; yet this is only caution, and not censure."

Owing, perhaps, to this cold repulse, the subject did not again come up until 1729. But the Truth is mighty and will prevail. Friends of Chester Monthly, still faithful to their testimony, this year proposed to the Quarter, "that inasmuch as we are restricted, by a rule of Discipline, from being concerned in fetching, or importing, negro slaves from their own country—whether it is not as reasonable, that we should be restricted from buying of them, when imported?" The yearly meeting deferred the consideration to the next year, 1730,—when, "having maturely deliberated thereon, are now of opinion that Friends ought to be very careful of making any such purchases, for the future, it being disagreeable to the sense of this meeting. And this meeting recommends it to the care of the several monthly meetings, to see that such who may be, or are likely to be, found in that practice, may be admonished, and cautioned, how they offend herein."

These advices were repeated, almost every year, and reports received from the subordinate meetings up to 1743. A minute of 1738 expresses "satisfaction in finding, by the reports," "so little occasion of offence," "concerning the encouraging the importation of negroes."

In 1743, the yearly meeting addressed the query to the subordinate meetings, to be answered annually,—“Do Friends observe the former advices of our Yearly Meeting, not to encourage the importation of negroes, nor to buy them after imported?”

In 1754, John Woolman published, "Considerations on

the keeping of negroes." The same year the Yearly Meeting issued an address to its members. They say, "If we continually bear in mind the royal law, 'of doing to others as we would be done by,' we shall never think of bereaving our fellow creatures of that valuable blessing, liberty, nor endure to grow rich by their bondage." "We entreat all to examine whether the purchasing of a negro, whether born here, or imported, doth not contribute to a further importation; and consequently to the upholding of all the evils above mentioned; and promoting man-stealing." "Finally, brethren, we entreat you in the bowels of Gospel love, *seriously to weigh the cause of detaining them in bondage.* If it be for your own private gain; or any other motive than their good, it is much to be feared that the love of God, and the influence of his Holy Spirit, is not the prevailing principle in you."

In 1755, another advance was made, by so modifying the query as to read, "Are Friends clear of importing or buying negroes, &c."

A minute of the same meeting, says: "The consideration of the inconsistency of the practice of being concerned in importing, or buying slaves, with our christian principles, being weightily revived, and, impressed by very suitable advices, and cautions, given on the occasion, it is the sense and judgment of this meeting, that where any transgress this rule of our discipline, the overseers ought speedily to inform the Monthly Meeting of such transgressors, in order that the meeting may proceed to treat further with them, as they may be directed, in the wisdom of Truth."

They had already restricted the foreign trade in human flesh, and were now coming to see the inconsistency of buying and selling men and women, whether born in Africa or in America.

In 1758, the Yearly Meeting voted, "there appears a unanimous concern prevailing, to put a stop to the increase of the practice of importing, buying, selling, or keeping slaves for term of life." "The injunction of our Lord and Master, 'to do unto others as we would they should do unto us,' it now appears to this meeting, would induce such Friends as have any slaves, to set them at liberty; *making a christian provision for them according to their ages, &c.* And, in order that Friends may be generally excited to the practice of this advice, some Friends signi-

fied that they are willing to visit, and treat with, all such Friends as have any slaves. The Meeting therefore approves of John Woolman, John Scarborough, John Sykes, and Daniel Stanton, undertaking that service." "And if, after the sense and judgment of this meeting, now given against every branch of this practice, any, professing with us, should persist to vindicate it, and be concerned in importing, selling, or purchasing slaves, the respective Monthly Meeting to which they belong, should manifest their disunion with such persons, by refusing to permit them to sit in meetings for discipline, or to be employed in the affairs of the church, or to receive from them any contributions towards the relief of the poor, or other services of the meeting."

During many subsequent years much concern, and incessant labour, was expended to purify the Society from slavery.

In 1774, at the instance of Philadelphia and Bucks Quarters, the Yearly Meeting provided,

"That such among us, who are, or shall be concerned in importing, selling, or purchasing; or shall give away; or transfer, any negro, or any other slave, in such manner as that their bondage is continued beyond the time limited by law, or custom, for white persons; and such members who accept them, ought to be speedily treated with;" and, also, "That where any member has been heretofore, so far excluded from religious fellowship, in case of further disorderly conduct, that they be treated with agreeable to our discipline."

In 1776, the testimony still progressing, the query was again extended. "Are Friends clear of importing, purchasing, disposing of, and holding mankind as slaves, &c." And a committee was appointed, to report to the Yearly Meeting, "the most effectual religious means for perfecting a work, which has long been the occasion of heavy labour to the faithful members of the church, and excited our desire to be fully clear of a practice so directly opposed to the law of righteousness." The report of this committee was adopted by the meeting, and was, in part, as follows: "Under the calming influence of pure love, we do with great unanimity, give it as our sense and judgment, that Quarterly and Monthly meetings, should speedily unite in a further close labour with all such as are slaveholders, and

have any right of members with us. And where any members continue to reject the advice of their brethren, and refuse to execute proper instruments of writing for releasing from a state of slavery, such as are in their power, or to whom they have any claim, whether arrived at full age, or in their minority, and no hopes of the continuance of Friends' labour being profitable to them; that Monthly Meetings, after having discharged a christian duty to such, should testify their disunion with them."

It does not appear that many slaves were held by the members of Society, subsequent to the year 1780.

A co-ordinate concern, had, for a long time, engaged the attention of Friends, for the temporal, and everlasting welfare and instruction of the African race, whether bond or free. And about this time many minds were brought to see, that *justice to the slave, demanded a remuneration for his labours during the period of his servitude.*

In 1779, the Yearly Meeting recommended, "That Friends may be conscientiously concerned to discharge their christian duty" to the liberated slaves: and, "that the state of that oppressed people who have been held by any of us, or our predecessors, in captivity and slavery, calls for a deep inquiry, and close examination, how far we are clear of withholding from them, what under such an exercise, may open to view as *their just right.*"

The following report of a committee of New Garden Monthly Meeting, as recorded in the book of minutes, will illustrate both the nature and extent of this exercise. The case was introduced voluntarily by the indebted party. "Agreeable to our appointment, we have several times met, and considered the case committed to us, concerning the uneasiness mentioned by Thomas Wood, concerning the negro formerly possessed by his father; and having carefully inquired into the circumstances, do find, that William Wood, about 16 years ago, set free from a state of slavery, the said negro, named Ceasar, on condition that he would behave himself justly and honestly, and also, that he would lay up, or deposit, in his, or some other safe hand, the sum of three pounds yearly, that in case he should be sick, or lame, he might not be chargeable to his said master's estate. In consequence of the said condition, the said Ceasar had laid up forty-two pounds, which appears to us to be his just property, and all the heirs of Mr. Wood, who are arrived

at full age, (except one who resides in Virginia,) cheerfully agree to let him have it. But as the said Ceasar informs us that he has no present use, or necessity for the said money, he agreed to have it deposited in the hands of Joshua Pusey, and proposed to advise with him, when any occasion occurred for applying it; with which we were well satisfied."

"It also further appears, that the said Ceasar served his said master in the capacity of a slave, something more than ten years, after he was twenty-one years of age; and, upon careful inquiry, we find he was tenderly used during said time, and nursed in the small-pox, which he had very heavily, and it was long before he recovered; so that we have reason to believe that it took at least one year to defray the expense thereof. These things the said Ceasar fully acknowledges, and further informs that his said master allowed him sundry privileges, during said term, whereby he made for himself at least five pounds a year, beside being well clothed and accommodated.

"After considering all the circumstances of his case, we are unanimously of the mind, that the further sum of five pounds a year, for the nine years he was in usual health, ought to be allowed him, out of the said estate; which the heirs now present, and of age, also agree to. And, it is agreed, with the said Ceasar's free consent, to be deposited with the other sum.

"And, as the instrument of writing by which the said William Wood declared the said Ceasar free, is conditioned, and, we apprehend, not sufficient to secure his freedom, the heirs, aforesaid, have executed a manumission suited to the occasion.

"Signed on behalf of the committee,

"THOMAS WOOD.

"Third mo. 6th, 1779."

In 1785, one of the monthly meetings reported to Burlington Quarter, "that two Friends, having each set a slave at liberty, expressed a desire to make a proper allowance for the time they were continued in their service, after they came of age. After divers times deliberating thereon, Friends, to whom such cases had been referred, advised, that the sums should be ascertained by indifferent persons; and one of the negroes being deceased, the sum adjudged

due to that case, should be paid to the next of kin, as in cases of intestates' estates; which advice the Friends have readily accepted, and have taken measures to carry into effect."

As Friends continued faithful to the successive unfolding of the Truth, as it is in Christ Jesus, new fields of labour were opened before them. In 1785, and the two following years, "it was afresh recommended to the watchful attention of our meeting for sufferings in particular, and to Friends individually, that no opportunity be lost 'of urging to those in power, the moral, and Christian necessity of suppressing the cruel traffic in those afflicted people,' and manifesting to the world the religious ground of our Christian testimony against this public wickedness."

Much concern was also felt, about this period, for the abolition of slavery generally; and many faithful labourers were sent into the field of the Great Husbandman, who doubtless done much to sow the seed, and to cultivate the crop, which we are now called upon to gather into the Lord's garner.

Another progressive testimony is developed, in the histories of John Woolman, of Anthony Benezette, of Joshua Evans, of Elias Hicks, and many other worthies, both in and out of the society, opposed to the traffic in, and the use of, the products of slave labour, as tending to encourage and support oppression and injustice. But, so far as we know, it was not until 1837 that the yearly meeting officially took hold of this concern. In the advices of that year, it is recommended, "To embrace every right opening to maintain, and exalt, our righteous testimony against slavery; and where any of our members feel any religious scruples, as to the use of the products of slave labour, that they faithfully attend thereto."

We see how hard it was for our ancestors to submit to have their eyes anointed with the eye-salve of the Kingdom, so that they could see clearly, the sinfulness of their conduct in oppressing their fellow-men. Let us learn by their experience, to humbly seek to have our own vision so purified, that we may discover, more readily, what our duties are in this matter. As the glorious beams of the Sun of Righteousness penetrate deeper and deeper into the dark recesses of selfishness in our hearts, may we not hope to advance farther and farther, until we shall become purified

from all connexion with slavery : or from any act whereby it may be encouraged and supported.

The acknowledgment of our predecessors' participation in the guilt of slaveholding, is made with a blush of shame ; but that blush is rendered deeper, by the reflection, that our descendants must soon look back upon us, and our inconsistencies, with similar emotions.

In conclusion, we again earnestly invite Friends to a faithful support of our precious testimonies in favour of the ever blessed Truth ; and a willingness to embrace every proper occasion to plead the cause of Justice and Humanity, on behalf of the slave. At the same time, we must bespeak a caution against a desolating spirit, which is now abroad in the world, under the delusive guise of superior light ; A spirit which seems to condemn the good as well as the evil, and denounces religious society, for the short-comings of its members. This is both unwise and unjust. While it inflicts a deep wound upon true religion ; and affords its enemies an occasion of rejoicing ; it creates a strong feeling, in many minds, opposed to the very object which it is ostensibly seeking to promote. Let us rather consider that we are not all called to the same work ; and that different degrees of light may be dispensed to us. That even those whom we may be disposed to denounce, as religious hypocrites, may be as honestly living up to the manifestations of light and knowledge, with which they have been furnished, as ourselves. Let us also remember that religious society has other, if not higher, aims, and objects, than the abolition of slavery, which are in danger of being frustrated by the ultra measures referred to. We think that remonstrance and entreaty, are far more effectual weapons, in moral warfare, than denunciation and abuse. In all things let us "endeavour to keep the unity of the spirit, which is the bond of peace." If there be any who outstrip, or lag behind us, or take a different road, in pursuit of the common object, and it should become our duty to encourage, to exhort, or to admonish them, in the language of our Christian advisers, "we recommend it to be done in such a disposition of mind, as may convince them, that we sincerely desire their recovery and restoration ; considering ourselves lest we also be tempted." And as this disposition is cherished we shall "be more careful to rectify our own failings and imperfections, than curious in observing, censuring, and aggravating, those of others."